

The Monitor



West Pierce Fire & Rescue

Proudly serving the citizens of Lakewood and University Place

3631 DREXLER DRIVE WEST, UNIVERSITY PLACE, WA 98466 | 253.564.1623 | www.westpierce.org

Letter from the Chief

Another year is in the books and 2016 was the busiest year on record for West Pierce Fire & Rescue, as the District responded to 15,904 calls for service. Call volume has been trending up each year since 2011 and in just the last two years, call volume has increased over 13 percent. Fortunately, as of June of this year, it appears that trend may be slowing down and 2017 will be similar to 2016.

With a continued high demand for service and limited resources, we continue to explore new ways of providing emergency response. Again this year, calls for minor medical needs and chronic health problems have increased faster than all other types of incidents. Due to this, new response models, such as basic life support ambulances, smaller emergency response units and innovative community healthcare services are all being evaluated. Managing the rapid rise in these lower priority calls while keeping advanced life support paramedic units available for critical emergencies is a top priority for the District.

With call volume staying consistent in numbers, our fleet is essential for making sure responders can reach the public. This year, West Pierce Fire & Rescue is excited to add three new fire engines to the fleet. These will be the first new engines in the last 10 years and the ones they are replacing are more than 30 years old. One engine was purchased with grant funds was awarded in 2015, but was only recently received due to the fact they are

custom-built when they're ordered. The other two engines have been ordered, but with a 400-day construction timeline, we do not anticipate them to be added to our fleet until 2019.

West Pierce is always seeking new grant funding opportunities and in the last year we have received more than 2 million dollars in grant awards. These grants fund a variety of equipment and programs such as hazardous materials equipment, Paramedic training, health and safety equipment, and community preparedness programs such as training for our Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT). A detailed list of grant awards can also be found on page 5.

West Pierce Fire & Rescue is very proud of the services we provide to the citizens of Lakewood, University Place and Steilacoom. Each and every West Pierce employee remains committed to compassionately delivering the high quality services you deserve and have come to expect from your fire department.

Jim Sharp
Fire Chief



EVERY SECOND COUNTS



PLAN 2 WAYS OUT!™



FIRE PREVENTION WEEK

OCTOBER 8-14, 2017

firepreventionweek.org

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West Pierce Receives Pro Patria Award

West Pierce Fire & Rescue has a long standing supportive relationship with our military members and our military community. Early this year, WPFR was nominated by Firefighter Christina Webb, who is also an active member of the Army Reserve, for an award given by the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESRG).

At the annual ESRG banquet in May, West Pierce Fire & Rescue was recognized and presented with the Pro Patria Award, which is the highest award that may be bestowed by a state ESRG committee and is presented to one public sector employer annually in Washington State. Recipients of this award have demonstrated support for National Guard and Reserve employees through their leadership and practices, to include adopting personnel policies that enable its military members to participate in required training and deployments without undue hardship. Currently, WPFR has six members who are active in the National Guard and Reserve and nearly 30 others who have served in the past.

West Pierce Fire & Rescue is also a strong advocate for the surrounding community. We are proud to be a part of the South Puget Sound Region, one of only 10 communities in the country to be named a Great American Defense Community in 2016. West Pierce Fire & Rescue is also a member of the South Sound Military and Communities Partnership, a coalition between the military, local governments, and State and Federal agencies working to improve collaboration in areas such as military relations, transportation, land use planning, environmental protection, emergency preparedness, health care, education and community and economic development.

West Pierce Fire & Rescue is extremely proud of the active role we take in supporting our military members and are honored to be part of a Great American Defense Community and would like to thank and recognize our six active members.



Firefighter/Engineer Ron Bahr
US Army



Firefighter Colby Coppinger
US Army



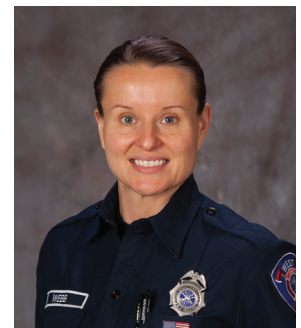
Firefighter/Engineer Chad Myers
US Air Force



Captain Lance Nelson
US Air Force



Firefighter Jonathan Tinsley
US Air Force



Firefighter Christina Webb
US Army

The Future of Emergency Medical Services



The future of emergency medical services (EMS) has been a hot topic throughout the fire service community for some time. Fire-based EMS programs were implemented across the country in the 1970s, marking a major shift in the core mission of the fire service. Throughout the 80s and 90s, many fire departments began transporting patients with critical injuries and those requiring advanced life support (ALS). Nationwide, people are turning to their local fire department for all forms of healthcare needs, accessing 9-1-1 for non-emergent medical care at an unprecedented rate.

West Pierce is no different. In the last five years, call volume increased over 20 percent with the overwhelming majority being patients with minor or

chronic medical problems. In addition to rapidly increasing call volume, a convergence of social issues, such as poverty and homelessness, combined with substance abuse disorders and mental health issues, continue to push first responders into new areas of healthcare. This has put a strain on fire-based EMS programs, not only here in West Pierce, but across the nation. In order to remain effective, systems designed decades ago will need to undergo a major overhaul in order to meet demands for service.

Many communities throughout the country are trying a variety of innovative health care programs leveraged off of existing fire department resources. Commonly referred to as Community Paramedicine or Mobile Integrated Healthcare, these programs primarily focus on fulfilling non-emergent healthcare needs within the community. Programs such as these represent a significant change in the way fire departments provide service. For decades, fire departments have focused on providing emergency medical services, with an emphasis on "emergency." Community Paramedicine programs are focused solely on managing patients with non-emergent medical needs.

A 2013 study by the Health Resources and Services Administration projects a shortage of 20,400 primary care physicians by 2020. Who will fill this gap? Many people feel the solution lies with the local fire department and most modern fire departments train their firefighters to provide emergency medical care, but with more and more people relying on 9-1-1 to access basic medical care, fire department systems are being strained to the breaking point. As demand for non-emergent medical response continues to rise, fire departments are finding it increasingly difficult to keep resources available for critical medical emergencies and fires. With limited resources, fire departments have to find new and creative ways to deliver health care services throughout the community.

West Pierce Fire & Rescue is currently evaluating the needs of the community as well as current resources. This information can determine whether or not some form of community paramedicine program would allow a way to more effectively manage non-emergent medical calls while keeping paramedic units available for critical emergencies.

Cutting Costs with Electricity

As part of a comprehensive environmental sustainability program established by West Pierce Fire & Rescue, the District began evaluating its fleet of vehicles.

Currently, a large majority of the District's support vehicles are comprised of large SUVs, many of which are 15-20 years old. Therefore, they are not fuel efficient and are costly to operate. With this in mind, the District began researching options for smaller, alternative fuel vehicles.

In early 2016, the District purchased its first Chevy Volt. It is a plug-in hybrid which allows the vehicle to operate fully electric, but still has a full-sized internal combustion/hybrid engine for those times when charging the vehicle is not possible.

Over the first year of operation, significant cost savings were recorded. The vehicle never had to be fueled, saving over 500 gallons of gas. While operating on electricity, it provides a 90 percent reduction in operating costs over the vehicle it replaced.

Due to the success with this vehicle, the District purchased two additional hybrid cars in 2017 to replace older SUVs. As part of West Pierce's environmental sustainability program, the District will continue to expand the use of fuel efficient vehicles, not only in the support fleet, but throughout its fleet of emergency response vehicles as well.



City, Police & Fire Attend National Incident Management Training

In March, 12 West Pierce Fire & Rescue personnel received invaluable training on the National Incident Management System in Emmitsburg, Maryland alongside community partners within Pierce County. While first responders use these expandable systems on a regular basis for emergencies, the opportunity to coordinate with city and elected officials on a large-scale exercise presented a valuable training scenario for the communities.

The first three days consisted of instruction on Incident Command System and interaction between a Policy Group and Emergency Operations Center staffers. In addition, the group had some training time on Washington state specific Web EMD, a PC-based program to catalog resource requests and activities pertaining to an emergency event. The final day was reserved for an actual exercise in which managing a large train derailment with a hazardous material release was the scenario.

Approximately 70 participants from agencies throughout Pierce County attended this course. Partner agencies include the cities of Lakewood, University Place and Tacoma; Lakewood, UP and Tacoma Police; Pierce County Department of Emergency Management, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, Port of Tacoma and Public Works.

This course was sponsored and paid for by FEMA, including training, lodging and airfare expenses.



Agencies Statewide Participate in West Pierce's Rescue Swimmer Classes



West Pierce Fire & Rescue is prepared and ready to respond to water emergencies each and every day. This includes anything from people in distress to boat and structure fires on or near the water. With Puget Sound shoreline and many lakes within West Pierce's jurisdiction, various vessels are utilized by firefighters, depending on the emergency. In addition, firefighters are trained as rescue swimmers and divers to enter the water to safely perform a rescue. The rescue swimmer program is taught by WPFR personnel, not only internally, but for first responders throughout Washington State.

Swimmers from agencies all over the state of Washington have been trained in WPFR's rescue swimmer class to learn what to do in case of a water emergency. When any first responder is going to get in the water, they need the skills, resources and training to execute a rescue safely and efficiently. Swimmers learn to identify a scene and how to locate and approach a victim, whether they are conscious or unconscious. They also train how to find someone under a dock or in a swim area day or night. This class is held over a four-day period and is completed in both pool and lake settings. Most importantly, they learn to be safe and make a difference in someone's life.

Two rescue swimmer classes were held in 2017 and taught by West Pierce Fire & Rescue instructors. The majority of this year's participants were from the Seattle Fire Department, as they have recently started their own rescue swimmer program. In other classes, fire, police and other public agencies have participated as well.

During the class held in May, participants were training in American Lake when they witnessed a young man yell for help as he went under the water. Multiple swimmers dove down and saved him within minutes. While a 9-1-1 response would have been generated had crews not already been in the water, the outcome for the man could have been very different.

In West Pierce, rescue swimmers and divers are staffed 24 hours per day, seven days per week, to ensure trained firefighters are always ready to respond to a water emergency. In 2016, the District responded to 30 emergencies on the water, both on lakes and Puget Sound. Incidents like these reiterate the importance of having these types of programs in place in our community.

First Youth Fire Academy Completed

On August 15, 2017, West Pierce Fire & Rescue proudly graduated 17 local students from the first WPFR Youth Fire Academy. This program was in partnership with the Lakewood Branch of the Boys & Girls Club of South Puget Sound. These students completed a six-week program, where they learned an array of fundamental firefighting skills including, but not limited to, emergency medical care, fire science, vehicle extrication and ladder operations, all of which were taught by West Pierce firefighters.

Fire departments nationwide host similar programs and have found great success in hiring candidates that have been exposed to this type of training and opportunity. There are several benefits to programs which offer this type of exposure to youth who may have an interest in the fire service as a career path. Students start thinking about their future and what they will do once they graduate high school and the Youth Academy is a great way to empower them with life skills and relationships, preparing them for a potential future in public service.

West Pierce Fire & Rescue would like to commend each and every recruit of the Youth Academy and thank the Lakewood Branch of the Boys & Girls Club of South Puget Sound for their dedication and partnership in making this program a great success.



Grants Help Control Costs and Support Vital Services

Providing services in a cost effective manner is one of West Pierce Fire & Rescue's top priorities. One way this is achieved is through an aggressive grant program that helps to offset costs of maintaining emergency operations. Since June 2016, the District has saved over 2 million dollars thanks to grant awards. These grants were received from local, state and federal agencies, as well as private corporations and foundations. This type of funding helps to maintain training programs, upgrade equipment, and support community-based programs, such as our Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). Highlights from the grant program over the last year are listed below.

Exhaust Removal System

Funding was received to install an exhaust removal system in four fire stations to keep toxic fumes from entering the apparatus bay and living areas, maintaining the safety of firefighters.

Savings to the District: \$257,924

Hazardous Materials

This grant funded equipment and supplies, including air monitors and firefighting foam, needed in the event of a hazardous materials spill.

Savings to the District: \$87,200

CERT Program

Two grants were awarded to support the CERT program, which trains residents how to prepare and help themselves during a disaster before professional help can arrive.

Savings to the District: \$10,000

Paramedic School

This regional grant, in partnership with Central Pierce Fire & Rescue, funds a total of eight firefighters to attend the paramedic program at Tacoma Community College, bringing more paramedics to West Pierce.

Savings to the District: \$740,000

Child Passenger Safety

Funding was received to purchase and translate educational materials to support the District's first grade booster seat educational program within the Clover Park and University Place School Districts.

Savings to the District: \$3,100

SAFER Grant

WPFR was awarded a SAFER grant to secure funding to hire three firefighters. These positions will help augment current staffing levels, improving overall response.

Savings to the District: \$988,839

TOTAL SAVINGS TO THE DISTRICT: \$2,087,063

Thank You West Pierce Fire & Rescue Retirees!

Over the past year, six members of West Pierce Fire & Rescue turned the page to a new chapter in their life over the past year - retirement. Collectively, 176 years of combined service and valuable experience will be leaving the organization. While it's difficult to see anyone decide to leave, as one of our core leadership priorities, West Pierce Fire & Rescue strongly endorses SUCCESSION: good leaders share their knowledge and strive to develop others into future leaders. We know that each and every retiree was a good leader, either by rank or experience in their craft and the seeds of excellence were sown. Congratulations, West Pierce retirees on a job well done!



Mike Pfannenstiel
Firefighter/Engineer
1978 - 2017



Mark Tinsley
Captain
1980 - 2017



Ron Stewart
Firefighter/Engineer
1987 - 2017



Roy Bean
Captain
1992 - 2017



Rick Snodgrass
Firefighter/Engineer
1992 - 2017



Michelle Johnson
Captain
1996 - 2016

Welcome West Pierce Fire & Rescue New Hires

In February, four new Firefighter/Paramedics and one Firefighter began the Red Knights Recruit Academy, as they started their career with West Pierce Fire & Rescue. This 13-week academy included more than 500 hours of training with a core group of WPFR instructors and peer fitness trainers. Each recruit spent many hours learning on the drill ground, as well as studying firefighting fundamentals and techniques in the classroom. At the end of the academy, four written and three practical exams were administered. While training on the drill ground, they learned hose and ladder handling, search and rescue, ventilation, auto extrication and many more skills used by firefighters on a daily basis. In the classroom, they studied basic fire behavior and hydrodynamics, all while practicing safety, company integrity and strong teamwork.

Something all firefighters have in common is the desire to serve their communities with the highest standards. Recruits bring new energy to the organization and the community. They are eager to learn as senior firefighters pass on their trade to prepare them for the career ahead. We would like to welcome them and we look forward to seeing them serve our community!



Andrew Douglas
Firefighter/Paramedic



Nicholas Ladd
Firefighter/Paramedic



Aaron Schrieck
Firefighter/Paramedic



Clayton Skinner
Firefighter/Paramedic



Philip Smith
Firefighter

Guide to Services

If you would like to inquire about any of these services, please contact us at **253.564.1623** or visit our website at **www.westpierce.org**.

CONNECT WITH US!



First Aid & CPR Classes

Classes are held monthly from 9 am - 5 pm and cover adult, child and infant CPR, AED training and basic first aid. The cost is \$40 and pre-registration is required.

Upcoming classes:

October 7
November 4
December 9



Preschool & Day Care Visits

Two free fire safety curriculums are available for preschools and daycares to use in the classroom. Teachers conduct several lessons of the curriculum and West Pierce Fire & Rescue personnel will come in to teach the final lesson so small children learn firefighters are their friends. Please call for a copy of either curriculum to be sent to you.



Blood Pressure Checks

Stop by any fire station to have your blood pressure checked.

Please be advised when emergency crews are out of the station on 9-1-1 calls, there may not be anyone available to assist you. Thank you in advance for your patience.



Custom-Fit Helmet & Life Jacket Program

Bicycle helmets are available for \$7, multi-sport helmets for \$10, and life jackets are \$14, cash only.

Fittings are scheduled by appointment and the wearer must be present in order to purchase. Please call to schedule an appointment.



Community Presentations

Public educators are available to speak about various fire and life safety topics to your community group.

Topics may include fire safety, fire extinguisher training, child passenger safety and much more. If you're interested in having someone come out to speak to your group, please call to schedule.



Smoke Alarm Installations

West Pierce Fire & Rescue is dedicated to helping save lives by offering FREE smoke alarm installations to residents within Lakewood and University Place.

Installations are completed by West Pierce Fire & Rescue personnel. To schedule an appointment, please call **253.983.4583**.



Car Seat Checks

Did you know that 80 percent of children are improperly restrained in vehicles? West Pierce Fire & Rescue would like to help you make sure your child is safe in the car.

Residents within the West Pierce service area may call to schedule an appointment with a certified Child Passenger Safety Technician.



Fire Station Tours

Station tours are available for community groups to see where firefighters spend their day. Safety talks and tours of the station and apparatus are held, all while learning what it's like to be a firefighter.

If you would like to bring a group to the fire station for a visit, please call to schedule.

Upcoming Events



CERT Classes

West Pierce Fire & Rescue is proud to offer Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) classes for those who live or work within the borders of West Pierce.

The class follows a model developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The idea behind this model is to teach residents how to help themselves or their neighbors in the first few hours or days following a disaster, before emergency responders are able to reach them to render professional help. In these classes, students gain hands-on skills, such as how to put out small fires, perform basic first aid, be safe around utilities and perform light search and rescue.

For more information regarding CERT, the 2018 class schedule or to register, please visit www.westpierce.org/CERT.



Fire Prevention Week - October 8-14, 2017

This year's Fire Prevention Week theme is "**every second counts and plan two ways out!**" It is important for everyone to have a fire escape plan in place and know how to safely exit your home in the event of a fire.

One component to a fire escape plan that shouldn't be overlooked is having working smoke alarms in the home. **If you have smoke alarms that are more than 10 years old or you don't have smoke alarms inside and outside each of your sleeping areas, call us!** Our grant-funded smoke alarm program allows us to assess, replace and/or install smoke alarms within homes in Lakewood and University Place **at no cost to the resident**. Appointments can be made by calling 253.983.4583.

WEST PIERCE FIRE & RESCUE

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Truck & Tractor Day - October 14, 2017

Join us at the City of Lakewood's Truck & Tractor Day on Saturday, October 14th from noon - 3 pm at Fort Steilacoom Park! Free hayrides, hard hats, and pumpkins are available (while supplies last). Enjoy pumpkin painting, crafts, games and even a giant slingshot for pumpkin chucking! Children can climb on dozens of giant trucks (including our fire engine!) and tractors and sit in the driver's seat and honk the horn. Make this favorite fall festival a family tradition!



Fall Safety Day - October 21, 2017

West Pierce Fire & Rescue's annual Fall Safety Day will be held on October 21st from 10 am - 1 pm at West Pierce Fire & Rescue Station 21, located at 5000 Steilacoom Boulevard SW in Lakewood.

There will be great activities for families, including custom helmet fittings (cash only and rider must be present for a custom fit), safety games, spraying the hose with a firefighter, information booths and of course, pumpkins! Bring the family out for a day of fun!